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GENERAL DEBATE: EXAMINATION OF THE WORLD SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO DRUG ABUSE, INCLUDING ILLICIT DEMAND, ILLICIT TRAFFICKING AND ILLICIT SUPPLY

Reports of the subsidiary bodies

Addendum

Report of the Second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Europe (incorporating the 19th Interpol European Meeting of Heads of National Drugs Services), Vienna, 22-26 February 1993

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INTRODUCTION

1. The report of the Second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Europe (incorporating the 19th Interpol European Meeting of Heads of National Drugs Services), which was held in Vienna from 22 to 26 February 1993, is before the Commission in document E/CN.7/1993/CRP.10 in the working languages of the Meeting. Chapters I and II of that report is herewith brought to the attention of the Commission as an addendum to the report of the subsidiary bodies contained in document E/CN.7/1993/2.

I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Decision adopted by the Second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe, regarding its organization and periodicity

2. At its 8th meeting, on 25 February 1993, the Second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Europe, decided to recommend to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs that the Third Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe, should be held in 1995. The Meeting also decided to recommend to the Commission that the meetings of HONLEA, Europe, should subsequently be held every two years under the aegis of UNDCP (see E/CN.7/1993/CRP.10, paragraphs 59-66).

B. Recommendations adopted by the Second Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe

3. The Second Meeting of HONLEA, Europe, adopted the recommendations emanating from the five working groups it had established to consider urgent matters and specific topics (see E/CN.7/1993/CRP.10, paragraphs 31, 34, 37, 40 and 43). The Meeting wishes to draw to the attention of the Commission the recommendations contained in paragraphs 34 (d), 37 (a), 40 (c), 40 (e) and 40/(f) of that report, which are addressed to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).

II. CURRENT SITUATION AND MOST RECENT TRENDS IN ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFIC IN THE EUROPEAN REGION

4. Most of the participants spoke on agenda item 4 and presented detailed reports on the illicit drug traffic situation prevailing in their countries. In many countries, the situation had deteriorated: new substances of abuse had appeared, the number of abusers was rising, the frequency and size of drug seizures had increased and new drug trafficking routes had emerged. Some participants described their countries as transit States, owing to their geographical position in relation to producer and consumer States, and highlighted the problems encountered by the relevant authorities, particularly in controlling numerous entry and exit points, areas through which drug traffickers could enter

and exit their countries by land, air or water. Several speakers reported on increased seizures of illicit drugs and on the arrest and prosecution of a large number of persons of different nationalities for drug-related offences, as well as on the dismantling of criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking. Drug abuse had spread to all parts of several countries, particularly those in central and eastern Europe. It was estimated that in 1992 there were 1.5 million drug abusers in the Russian Federation and 54,000 in Ukraine.

5. Several speakers expressed concern at the deteriorating situation with regard to drug abuse and illicit traffic in central and eastern European countries. Mention was also made of the abolishment or adjustment of border controls in the States members of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1993 and its implications for illicit drug trafficking and money-laundering in Europe. Political turmoil, particularly in the former republics of Yugoslavia, and the opening of borders between eastern and western Europe had provided traffickers with greater opportunities to move illicit drugs to western European markets, leading to an expansion of illicit cultivation and the emergence of new drug trafficking activities and routes. The privatization of the economies of the former socialist countries had provided traffickers with opportunities to launder, through "sham" and legitimate businesses, proceeds derived from drug-trafficking activities. The Meeting was informed of measures taken by such countries to counter illicit trafficking and drug abuse, including an agreement to combat illicit drug trafficking that had been signed by the Governments of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Estonia, at Kiev in October 1992.

6. While the United States remained the major illicit market for cocaine, South American cartels were increasingly targeting western Europe, concealing many large bulk shipments on vessels and in containers. Europe had become one of the major markets for cocaine. Over 10 tonnes of cocaine had been seized in the first nine months of 1992, more than the amount of heroin seized in the same period. Although 23 European countries had reported cocaine seizures to ICPO/Interpol in 1992, the bulk of the seizures reported that year had been made in the following nine countries, listed according to the amount seized, in decreasing order: Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Switzerland. France, Portugal and the United Kingdom had reported significant increases in cocaine seizures during 1992. Due to linguistic and cultural ties, Portugal's role as one of the primary European entry points for consignments of cocaine had increased commensurately with Brazil's role in the illicit manufacture and shipment of cocaine from South America. Cocaine seizures in the United Kingdom had doubled in 1992, reaching a record level of over 2 tonnes. In the Netherlands, cocaine seizures had increased by 20 per cent: much of the cocaine seized had been discovered in containers in the ports of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Cocaine shipments were being sent directly to ports in the United Kingdom whereas, prior to 1990, the bulk of cocaine seized in that country had crossed the European continent. Cocaine from Caribbean countries,

particularly Jamaica, continued to feed the crack market in the United Kingdom, where London was acting as the main centre of distribution.

7. In the first six months of 1992, successful drug law enforcement activities in the United States and in countries in Latin America had had a significant impact on the illicit traffic in cocaine leading to an increase in the price per kilogram and to a decrease in the average purity in several major metropolitan areas in the United States. Larger consignments of cocaine had entered Canada by private aircraft, in maritime cargo containers and, recently, by mothership.

8. Several countries in Europe and North America continued to be adversely affected by illicit traffic in heroin originating from south-east and south-west Asia. Demand for heroin of high purity in North America and western Europe had contributed to the escalating volume of traffic; over 8 tonnes of heroin and morphine had been seized in Europe in 1992. Relatively stable prices, combined with a continuing rise in purity at the street level, indicated that heroin availability remained high. Heroin abuse had shown an upward trend in most European countries; significant seizures had been made in Germany, Italy, Spain, Netherlands and United Kingdom. In Germany, 1.4/tonnes of heroin had been seized in 1992, compared with 1.5 tonnes in 1991.

9. Cannabis, in various forms, continued to be one of the most commonly abused drugs in European countries. During 1992, cannabis seizures had increased significantly in Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Turkey and United Kingdom. Cannabis seizures in the United Kingdom had risen by 63 per cent to over 44.5 tonnes in 1992. Major cannabis seizures, including a single consignment of 10 tonnes, had been made by French authorities. Morocco was the major source of cannabis from that country for western Europe. Significant seizures had been made of cannabis consignments from that country concealed on pleasure vessels and in freight. In Turkey, seizures of cannabis, mostly Lebanese cannabis, had increased from 5.5 tonnes in 1991 to 20.8 tonnes in 1992.

10. Lebanon, Morocco and Pakistan were the three main sources of cannabis resin destined for Europe. In 1992, 70 tonnes of cannabis resin had been seized in the Netherlands. Multi-tonne shipments of cannabis resin were being concealed mainly in maritime cargo containers and freight.

11. In the United States, the abuse of cannabis had been declining steadily since 1979, when there had been approximately 22.5 million cannabis abusers, compared with 9.7 million in 1991. Abuse of cannabis was also reported to be on the decline in Canada. Mexico was the main source of cannabis entering the United States; in the United States, Mexican cannabis

accounted for about 42/per cent and domestically cultivated cannabis about 22 per cent of the cannabis found on the illicit market. Jamaica had been the source of 43 per cent of the cannabis seized in Canada during 1992.

12. Illicit opium poppy and cannabis cultivation was reported in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Ukraine. Several speakers referred to measures adopted by their Governments to counter the illicit cultivation of the opium poppy and cannabis, which often took place in remote or prohibited areas such as Chernobyl. Law enforcement authorities in several CIS member States had destroyed many fields of illicitly cultivated poppy or wild-growing cannabis. The eradication capability of those countries remained limited. During 1992, the authorities of the Netherlands had located 37 plantations of Dutch cannabis ("Nederwiet") and had destroyed 300,000/cannabis plants. In the United States, indoor-grown cannabis had, for the first time, been confiscated in all 50 states in 1991.

13. The abuse of psychotropic substances had increased as a result of the diversion of large quantities of those substances from the licit market and the increased illicit manufacture of those substances in clandestine laboratories. The manufacture, sale and distribution of psychotropic substances had become difficult to control in several former socialist countries following the privatization of their pharmaceutical industries and the liberalization of trade. The increased availability of psychotropic substances on the illicit market was reflected in the expanding illicit traffic in fenetylline from Europe through Turkey by road to the Persian Gulf States; over 2 million tablets containing fenetylline had been seized in Turkey in 1992.

14. Amphetamines continued to be one of the most widely abused psychotropic substances in Europe. In 1992, there had been increased seizures of amphetamines at the street level in Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom, as well as in the Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). In 1992, seizures of amphetamines had exceeded 100 kg for the first time in Germany and exceeded 600 kg in the United Kingdom. The bulk of amphetamines seized in both of those countries had been clandestinely manufactured in the Netherlands. Poland's role as a supplier of amphetamines to the Scandinavian countries had increased significantly; 20 per cent of all amphetamines seized in Norway and Sweden in 1992 had originated in Poland.

15. Methamphetamine represented a substantial trafficking and abuse problem in western and south-western United States. Methylenedioxymethamphetamine/(MDMA) was increasingly being abused in more European countries and in southern and north-eastern United States, particularly in nightclubs and all-night dance parties, predominantly by persons 18-30 years of age. Abuse of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), phencyclidine (PCP) and methamphetamine in Canada and of LSD in France, Germany

and the United Kingdom remained high. In 1992, the Netherlands and the United States had been the principal sources of LSD entering Europe. The source of most of the LSD seized in the United Kingdom had been the west coast of the United States.

16. Most speakers commented on the routes and the modus operandi adopted by drug traffickers, which kept changing as traffickers adjusted to drug law enforcement initiatives. Heroin from south-west Asia was being smuggled by land, often concealed in secret compartments in vehicles, by sea, or by air, using couriers and a string of international airports.

17. Most of the heroin was being transported from source countries to Europe by road over the Balkan route, conveyed on transport international routier (TIR) trucks, which constituted a cheap means of transporting bulk consignments with minimal risk of detection. Private vehicles, minibuses and coaches were sometimes used rather than TIR vehicles in, for example, the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), as well as in the United Kingdom. Concealment remained sophisticated, making detection difficult. Turkey was the principal gateway for heroin traffic to Europe along the Balkan route - Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and United Kingdom being the major recipient countries. About 60 per cent of the heroin in Germany was smuggled through Turkey, primarily on TIR trucks driven over the Balkan route. The opening of the borders of central and eastern European countries, as well as events in the former Yugoslavia, had resulted in the traditional Balkan route shifting southward to Greece and by boat from there to Italy and northward through Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation and Slovakia. Some smuggling was also taking place via the Caucasus, through Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The Balkan route was also used for illicit traffic in psychotropic substances, precursors and essential chemicals, particularly acetic anhydride, from western Europe, through the southern borders of Turkey to the Persian Gulf States and south-west Asia.

18. Body concealment, as well as false luggage compartments and linings, continued to be among the most frequently used means of trafficking in illicit drugs, particularly heroin and cocaine. Airline passengers of different nationalities continued to be used as couriers to smuggle illicit drugs, particularly heroin from south-east and south-west Asia and cocaine from South America. Eastern and central European airports were frequently used as transit points for cocaine couriers arriving from South American countries and continuing their journey by train or road transport to destinations in western Europe.

19. Maritime vessels were increasingly being used to transport bulk shipments of cocaine from source countries to Europe. The Azores, the Canary Islands, Cape Verde and Madeira Island were frequently used as supply, refuelling or transshipment points. The vessels, transporting mainly coffee and bananas, were arriving from South America in ports in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. Several vessels, specially those trafficking in cannabis from Morocco to northern Europe, were trying to avoid

detection by French and British authorities in the English Channel by using a northern route round the United Kingdom. There was a growing tendency for consignments of illicit drugs, notably cannabis, cocaine and heroin, to be concealed among containerized legitimate cargo.

20. The European market for illicit drugs, particularly heroin, was increasingly being dominated by illicit drug trafficking networks that were becoming more professionally organized, difficult to penetrate and prone to use violence. They were constantly seeking information about police measures with a view to undermining them. The growing links between terrorist organizations and drug trafficking networks were noted. Increased drug criminality, especially organized crime, grew particularly rapidly in States of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In the Russian Federation about 5,000 drug traffickers had been arrested in 1992. The activities of organized drug trafficking syndicates currently encompassed central, eastern and western Europe and involved persons from different European countries. Drug trafficking organizations involving Turkish nationals were often structured according to family ties; usually, several members of the same family were located in different European countries. They continued to exercise varying degrees of influence on the wholesale and mid-level distribution of heroin in several European countries. They appeared to be forging closer links with Dutch, German, Italian and Spanish criminal syndicates involved principally at the distribution level. Illicit traffic in cocaine to Europe was controlled by South American cocaine cartels operating in collusion with European drug trafficking syndicates at the distribution level. Many of the amphetamine traffickers were well-known criminals operating from common bases in Germany and the Netherlands, as well as in the Nordic countries, and having long-standing working arrangements for the procurement of precursors, the operation of clandestine laboratories, and the distribution and sale of amphetamines.

21. Wholesale and mid-level distribution of and trafficking in heroin in Canada and the United States were dominated by ethnic groups with ties to the source countries. Major south-east Asian drug trafficking criminal organizations were controlling the shipment of heroin from that region to Canada and the United States. Nigerian traffickers were using persons from other western African countries and, increasingly, persons from eastern European countries or the United States as couriers to smuggle south-east Asian heroin to the United States by air.

22. Measures had been taken by several Governments to bring their national legislation in line with the provisions of the international drug control treaties, particularly the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 (E/CONF.82/15 and Corr.2). These included more stringent penal sanctions for drug trafficking offences, prevention of the diversion of precursors, and adoption of new investigative techniques such as controlled delivery. Regarding measures to combat illicit traffic on the high seas, the United Kingdom had established new procedures to enable it

to respond more quickly to requests made to board British ships on the high seas. A convention on illicit traffic on the high seas was being drafted by the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe to enable the provisions of article 17 of the 1988 Convention to be implemented more effectively in the European region. With regard to article 12, concerning the monitoring of precursors, suspicious shipments of chemicals that might be used as precursors for the illicit manufacture of drugs were being closely monitored in several countries and had led, for example, to the detection of 11 illicit laboratories in the United Kingdom in 1992. New legislation that was being adopted by the EEC would be applicable in all its member States.

23. Legislation had recently been adopted in several countries to make money-laundering a criminal offence and to facilitate the investigation of such offences. Investigations into money-laundering operations had resulted in the tracing and confiscation of large sums of money and property derived from illicit trafficking. The Meeting was informed that in 1992 the Luxembourg criminal court of first instance had convicted three Colombians and had imposed fines totalling 15 million Luxembourg francs for money-laundering offences. An estimated US$ 36 million was frozen in banks located in 11/European countries. Reference was made to the Council of the European Communities directive of 10 June 1991 on prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money-laundering and to the introduction of new legislation by the 12 EEC member States. The new laws would strengthen provisions concerning the laundering of proceeds derived from illicit traffic and assist in the implementation of the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force established by the heads of State or Government of the Group of Seven major industrialized nations and the President of the Commission of the European Communities (CEC) at the fifteenth annual economic summit, held in Paris in July 1989.

24. Several speakers emphasized the need to intensify regional cooperation, particularly between eastern and western European States, and referred to the importance of joint action to counter transborder drug trafficking. Reference was made to the positive results achieved through bilateral and regional agreements or other forms of cooperation during 1992, which had led to the dismantling of drug trafficking networks and the seizure of large consignments of illicit drugs. The important role played by drug law enforcement liaison officers posted in strategic capitals of the region was highlighted. With regard to regional agreements, special mention was made of the urgency to ratify the implementation agreements of the Schengen accord to strengthen control at the external borders of the EEC member States.

25. Several speakers informed the Meeting of measures taken by their Governments to deal with the deteriorating situation with regard to illicit trafficking and drug abuse. More efficient, specialized, better-structured drug law enforcement agencies had been established in their countries to ensure coordination between various law enforcement agencies, particularly in sharing intelligence. To ensure the rapid exchange of information between drug law enforcement agencies responsible for operations

against drug traffickers, States were urged to establish a coordination mechanism for international cooperation. Reference was made to the steps taken by Italy and the United Kingdom to establish a single agency as a focal point to gather and disseminate drug intelligence to the agencies concerned and to coordinate national efforts to combat illicit drug traffic.

26. Several Governments in the region had adopted comprehensive approaches to curb the demand for illicit drugs. Programmes dealing with drug abuse prevention and the treatment, rehabilitation and social integration of drug abusers had been initiated. Nationwide campaigns to raise public awareness, particularly programmes targeting high-risk populations, had been undertaken in several countries.

27. Several speakers commended UNDCP for its initiative in undertaking missions to seven CIS member States and the Baltic States during 1992 and for the assistance it had provided to countries on the Balkan route. Mention was made of the legal assistance provided to the CIS member States and the Baltic States.

28. The International Narcotics Control Board was commended for its strong stance against the legalization of the non-medical use of drugs. One speaker mentioned the high cost incurred by his Government in the control of the cultivation of the opium poppy and the manufacture of opiates. He considered that the dismantling of the control regime by decriminalizing the use of controlled drugs in consumer countries would absolve producer countries from their responsibility to maintain control of licit production.